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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/691,674	10/24/2003	Carol D. Snyder	FSHR075/00US	6339
22903	7590	04/15/2004	EXAMINER	
COOLEY GODWARD LLP			ACKUN, JACOB K	
ATTN: PATENT GROUP			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
11951 FREEDOM DRIVE, SUITE 1700			3712	
ONE FREEDOM SQUARE- RESTON TOWN CENTER				
RESTON, VA 20190-5061				
DATE MAILED: 04/15/2004				

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)
	10/691,674	SNYDER, CAROL D.
	Examiner	Art Unit
	Jacob K. Ackun Jr.	3712

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.
- 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) Claim(s) 1-23 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) ____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) Claim(s) 1-23 is/are rejected.
- 7) Claim(s) ____ is/are objected to.
- 8) Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) The drawing(s) filed on ____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. ____. |
| 3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date ____. | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: ____. |

Art Unit: 3712

1. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

2. Claims 1-12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. Claim 1 is indefinite because it is vague as to whether it recites the combination of the support surface and the apparatus or the subcombination of the apparatus only. This in turn is because while line 1 of the claim indicates that what is claimed is the subcombination, the claim contains at least one structural limitation that is dependent on the support surface (note lines 5 and 6). In this office action the claims are presumed to be drawn to the subcombination in order to give them their broadest reasonable interpretation. Accordingly all references in the claims to any support surface are considered to be only statements of intended use with respect to the claimed apparatus. On the other hand clarification of the scope of the claims is required.

3. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

4. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person

having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

5. Claims 1-23 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b and/or e) as anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as obvious over Maese Jr., So, Melohn et al., Fobean et al., Levenson, Johansson, Bland, or Lippman. The claims appear to be so broadly drafted that they read on various devices as noted herein. Each and every one of the applied references discloses a device that may be termed an apparatus as recited in claim 1 or even a convertible play center as recited in claim 13, the latter because each is convertible from one configuration to the other. Each disclosed device comprises structures hinged together (or that may be folded with respect to one another) on which the claimed structures read.

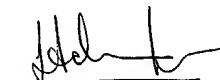
For example the device disclosed in each reference has a panel or structure that meets the requirements of the claimed base member because it is either expressly disclosed as being parallel to some support surface or because it is inherently capable of being placed parallel to some support surface. Each base member is pivotally coupled or otherwise attached to another structure or panel on which the claimed support member or activity center reads, since this other structure or panel is either expressly disclosed as being positioned as recited in the claims or is inherently so positionable, and since they are all either expressly or inherently capable of “activity” or “support” of some sort. Finally each support member is attached to another structure on which the claimed extension member or slide member reads, since this latter structure is either expressly or inherently capable of being positioned as claimed. The claimed arc member reads on any appropriate member (one that is connected as claimed) that also forms an arc (note items 44 in Melohn et al, 28 in Fobean et al or 22 in Levenson et al., as examples only).

In the event the references are later deemed not to show either visual or audible outputs as claimed it would have been obvious to provide the same with all of the devices disclosed in order to make them more interesting for children to play with (the noted outputs are notorious in the relevant art to enhance amusement. The method claims recite obvious methods of the use of each of the devices.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Jacob K. Ackun Jr. whose telephone number is (703)308-3867. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Friday 8.30AM-5.00PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Derris Banks can be reached on (703)308-1745. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).



Jacob K. Ackun Jr.
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 3712

J.A.